

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:DBARCHARD:SO
APPROVED BY S/AA - ALFRED L. ATHERTON, JR.
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NEA:ADUBS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DACCA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 098385

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PDIP, BG, US

SUBJECT:AMBASSADOR SIDDIQI'S CALL ON AMBASSADOR ATHERTON

1. AMBASSADOR SIDDIQI ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTER HUMAYUN KABIR, PAID A FAREWELL CALL APRIL 13 ON AMBASSADOR ATHERTON IN HIS CAPACITY AS OUTGOING STEWARD OF NEA. BANGLADESH DESK OFFICER ARCHARD SAT IN ON 20-MINUTE CALL. SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS DISCUSSED WERE ELECTION PLANS, BDG CANDIDATE FOR WORLD FOOD COUNCIL, A ZIA VISIT AND BANGLADESH CHANCERY PROBLEMS HERE.

2. ELECTIONS: ATHERTON NOTED OUR PLEASURE THAT PLANS FOR ELECTIONS ARE GOING FORWARD, AS THIS SEEMS TO BE AN INDICATION THAT THINGS ARE BACK ON THE NORMAL PATH. SIDDIQI SAID THAT HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO ELECTIONS AS ANY ELECTED GOVERNMENT ADDS CONSIDERABLY TO STABILITY.

3. WORLD FOOD COUNCIL: SIDDIQI HANDED OVER A LETTER TO
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THE SECRETARY FROM FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR SHAMSUL HUQ WHICH SEEKS OUR SUPPORT FOR SALAHUDDIN AHMED FOR THE POST OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD FOOD COUNCIL. SIDDIQI MADE CLEAR THAT HE HAD INFORMED HIS GOVERNMENT THAT THE U.S. HAS ITS OWN CANDIDATE FOR THE POST, BUT THAT HE HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY ASKED TO BRING UP THE MATTER AGAIN. ATHERTON

SAID WE WILL LOOK INTO THE ISSUE. ARCHARD POINTED OUT THAT AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (A FILIPINO) IS FROM THE THIRD WORLD, WE ARE TAKING THE POSITION THAT SOME BALANCE WOULD BE GIVEN BY HAVING AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FROM A WESTERN COUNTRY.

4. A ZIA VISIT: SIDDIQI SAID THAT LAST YEAR THE USG HAD HELD OUT THE HOPE FOR A ZIA VISIT TO THE U.S. IN 1978. ZIA IS CONSIDERING COMING TO NEW YORK FOR THE SSOD AND WOULD LIKE TO MEET THE PRESIDENT. WE HAVE SAID A MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT IN WASHINGTON IS NOT POSSIBLE. DO WE HAVE ANY OBJECTIONS IN PRINCIPLE TO HIS VISITING? ATHERTON ASSURED SIDDIQI THAT WE HAD NO OBJECTIONS IN PRINCIPLE TO A ZIA VISIT. IT IS SIMPLY THAT THE PRESSURES ON THE PRESIDENT'S TIME ARE VERY HEAVY. WE HAVE ALREADY HAD TO POSTPONE SOME VISITS WHICH EARLIER HAD BEEN AGREED TO AND THERE ARE MANY OTHER LEADERS JUST FROM THE NEA AREA ALONE WHO WOULD LIKE TO COME BUT FOR WHOM WE CANNOT FIND TIME ON THE PRESIDENT'S BUSY SCHEDULE.

5. BANGLADESH CHANCERY: SIDDIQI SAID THAT THE BANGLADESH EMBASSY'S APPLICATION IS STILL PENDING FOR A ZONING VARIANCE WHICH WOULD ALLOW THEM TO OCCUPY THE BUILDING PROPOSED AS A NEW CHANCERY. THE NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION'S REPORT WHICH WOULD OPEN UP MORE AREAS FOR CHANCERIES IS STILL UNDER STUDY BY THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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THE EMBASSY HAS HAD ASSURANCES FROM THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO SUPPORT ITS REQUEST BUT THE EMBASSY IS NERVOUS ABOUT THE POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF THE MATTER. ATHERTON SAID THAT IT APPEARED THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS DOING ALL IT COULD, BUT THAT IF ANY EXTRA PUSH WAS NEEDED, HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO DO WHATEVER HE CAN. CHRISTOPHER

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